

## May 20: March to protest NATO summit in Chicago!



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The NATO war-makers, fresh from their missile barrage on Libya, are coming to Chicago this month for a summit meeting. We can expect that U.S. politicians and the compliant media will spare no effort to glad-hand the NATO representatives on their arrival. But protesters, who are weary of the endless war in Afghanistan and dazed by the attack on Libya, will give NATO a greeting of a different kind. Tens of thousands will fill the streets of Chicago to demand, "No to NATO! No to War and Austerity!"

A mass protest march and rally will take place on Sunday, May 20, beginning at 12 noon at the Petrillo Band Shell in Grant Park. At last count, the protest has been endorsed by over 130 organizations from around the United States and Canada, plus prominent individuals such as the Rev. Jesse Jackson. The Coalition Against NATO/G8 War & Poverty Agenda (CANG8) is organizing the event. The umbrella group was formed last summer by some 80 organizations, including the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), which put out the initial call for the protest.

Protesters already have won a couple of victories. In March, President Obama announced that the G8 summit, which had been scheduled to precede the NATO meeting in Chicago, would instead be shuffled into the confines of Camp David. The G8, composed of heads of state from the eight "major" industrial nations (without China), will thus be allowed to meet in a fortress in the Maryland woods—far away from protesters and the eyes of the public.

And in early May, after months of waging a vigorous national campaign for the right of free speech, CANG8

was informed by the city of Chicago that they would be given a permit for the May 20 rally to take place at a location not far from the NATO meeting. The rally organizers had demanded a rally site "within sight and sound" of the summit; the site they were given, as a compromise, will be three blocks away.

Nevertheless, security arrangements in Chicago are being handled in a manner that seems deliberately calculated to try to scare away potential protesters, or at least to isolate them and minimize public exposure to their message. For example, the Milwaukee area branch of the American Red Cross told the media in late April that the Secret Service and Chicago authorities had asked them to prepare shelters for a mass evacuation from Chicago!

In early May, the U.S. Secret Service released security plans that specified that major roadways, tourist attractions, and parking lots would be closed. Closures would affect areas from O'Hare International Airport to downtown Chicago. Chicago museums were considering closing their doors. Several banks announced they would shut their branches, while one downtown office complex urged corporate execs to try to avoid hassles by "dressing down" to blend more easily with protesters on the street.

It is expected that representatives from over 60 countries will attend the NATO summit, though the conference will naturally be dominated by the United States and its close imperialist "partners." The main item on the agenda will be the U.S./NATO war in Afghanistan. The slogan put forward by NATO officials is "in together, out together" from Afghanistan—meaning that they are hoping that none of the European powers with troops in the country will withdraw them

### INSIDE SOCIALIST ACTION

- What is a general strike? — 2
- ILWU longshore pact — 3
- May Day actions — 4
- Libya's Shadow — 5
- Revolution in Spain — 6
- Gerry Foley — 8
- Canada news — 9
- Puerto Rican students — 10
- Film: *Hunger Games* — 11

**EGYPT**  
page 12

until the agreed-upon date of 2014.

The United States needs all the help it can get from its European allies in the Afghanistan war. The Hamid Karzai regime in Kabul has proven corrupt and deeply

(continued on page 5)

# What is a General Strike?

By JOHN LESLIE

Lately, with the growth of the Occupy movement, there's been a lot of talk about the general strike as a weapon of the class struggle. The Occupy Oakland port shutdown on Nov. 2 was referred to as a one-day general strike. And various Occupy sites around the United States talked about calling a general strike for May Day 2012.

We are all for the re-introduction of the general strike as a tactic in the working-class arsenal but must pose the questions—*what* is a general strike and *how* is it organized?

The general strike, as a tactic, is common enough in other parts of the world. For instance, there have been recent one-day general strikes in Greece, Spain, and Portugal (among others), plus the massive one-day general strike in India of some 100 million workers in February. There are examples in U.S. labor history too—the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, Seattle in 1919, or the San Francisco longshore strike in 1934.

Tom Kerry discussed the Seattle General Strike of 1919 as part of a series of lectures he delivered in 1976 on U.S. labor history. Kerry was a long-time socialist, trade unionist, and leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

Kerry pointed out that “a general strike is social dynamite with a burning fuse. The question immediately arises: Where does the power of decision reside in matters concerning the life of the city? Who is to police the city? The cops are not viewed as ‘friends’ of the strike; to the contrary, their role is that of chief strike-breakers for the boss class. The union strike committee must establish its own police force. How is the city to be fed? What institutions are to be permitted to remain open?



“And who is to supervise those permitted to operate? It is impossible to detail here all of the problems that are immediately posed.”  
Ultimately, the general strike poses the question of

which class holds power; it is a *political* as well as an economic strike. Kerry says: “Alongside the regularly established governmental power and its apparatus, there comes into existence the general strike committee with its apparatus, to establish a form of dual power. The dynamic of the dual power is that more and more the strike council is compelled to take over the functions of the state.

“A situation of dual power cannot, by its very nature, exist for long. It must be resolved by the hegemony of one or the other of the great contending classes. One or the other must prevail.”

In past years, unfortunately, we have heard the general strike tactic reduced to a formula that is repeated by left sectarians almost by rote: “A general strike to free Mumia,” or “a general strike to end the war(s).” While it's true that a general strike could accomplish these tasks, you can't just suck a major action by the working class out of your thumb.

A general strike is a serious matter for revolutionaries, as are all other methods of working-class mobilization. These include strikes, occupations of workplaces and public spaces, and mass marches. The general strike must be approached seriously and be prepared through patient, systematic work in the working class and its institutions. ■

**Are YOU a new reader of Socialist Action newspaper? Take advantage of our introductory subscription offer — and pay half the regular price! Just \$10 for one year or \$5 for 5 months.**

**Offer ends June 1. Clip the coupon below!**

## A WORKERS' ACTION PROGRAM TO FIGHT THE CRISIS

We propose an EMERGENCY CONGRESS OF LABOR to discuss and take steps to implement the following demands —

1) Bail out the people, not the bankers! Open the account books of the banks to full public inspection. Nationalize the banks to be supervised by workers' committees.

2) No foreclosures! No forced evictions! Cancel usurious debt payments, and reduce mortgage payments in proportion to their capitalist-caused decline in value.

3) Full employment at union wages! An emergency public works program to employ all jobless workers and youth! Employ people to build what we need — low-cost quality housing, efficient mass transportation, cheap and renewable sources of power, schools, clinics — and to conserve our water, forests, farmland, and open space.

4) Immediate and full withdrawal of U.S. troops and mercenaries from Iraq & Afghanistan! Close all U.S. bases abroad! No money for the military — use funds instead for public works! Convert the war industries to making products for people's needs and to combat global warming.

5) Reduce the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, and cut the retirement age to 55. Provide unemployment and retirement payments at the level of union wages and benefits.

6) To combat inflation: A sliding scale of wages and pensions that matches the rises in consumer prices. To combat high medical costs: A free, universal, public health-care system.

7) Immediate citizenship for all undocumented workers. No job discrimination; equal pay for equal work — regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, or national origin.

8) Nationalize manufacturing, big agribusiness, energy, and transportation corporations and place them under the control of elected committees of workers.

9) To mobilize support for the demands it adopts, the EMERGENCY CONGRESS should organize ACTION COMMITTEES in every workplace and neighborhood threatened by the crisis. These committees can draw up more concrete demands than the ones outlined above.

10) To put all these measures into effect, we need a LABOR PARTY — based on a fighting union movement and all people who are oppressed and exploited. For a workers' government!

**SOCIALIST ACTION** Closing news date: May 7, 2012  
Editor: Michael Schreiber Canada Editor: Barry Weisleder

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly by Socialist Action Publishing Association, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Socialist Action, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. RATES: For one year (12 issues, 1st-class mail): U.S., Canada, Mexico — \$20. All other countries — \$30. Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Socialist Action. These are expressed in editorials. Socialist Action is edited, designed, and laid out entirely by volunteer labor. It is printed by members of Local 583, Allied Printing Trades Council, San Francisco, Calif.

**SOCIALIST ACTION**

©GCC/ABT 869-M

For info about Socialist Action and how to join: Socialist Action National Office, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610, [socialistaction@gmail.com](mailto:socialistaction@gmail.com), (510) 268-9429

Socialist Action newspaper editorial offices: [socialistactionnews@yahoo.com](mailto:socialistactionnews@yahoo.com) Website: [www.socialistaction.org](http://www.socialistaction.org)

## Subscribe to Socialist Action

Get Socialist Action newspaper each month by 1st-class mail!

Special offer (half price) for new readers.

— \$5 for 5 months — \$10 for 12 months

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I want to join the Socialist Action Newspaper Supporters Club.  
I enclose an extra contribution of:  \$100  \$200  Other

Clip and mail to: Socialist Action newspaper, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610.

## WHERE TO FIND SOCIALIST ACTION

- ASHLAND, Ore.: [damonjure@earthlink.net](mailto:damonjure@earthlink.net)
- BOSTON: [bostsocact@gmail.com](mailto:bostsocact@gmail.com) (781) 630-0250
- CARRBORO, N.C.: (919) 967-2866, [robonica@lycos.com](mailto:robonica@lycos.com)
- CHICAGO: P.O. Box 578428 Chicago, IL 60657, [chisocialistaction@yahoo.com](mailto:chisocialistaction@yahoo.com)
- CONNECTICUT: (860) 478-5300
- DULUTH, MINN.: [wainosunrise@yahoo.com](mailto:wainosunrise@yahoo.com). [www.thenorthernworker.blogspot.com](http://www.thenorthernworker.blogspot.com)
- FLORIDA: [socialistaction\\_tampa@hotmail.com](mailto:socialistaction_tampa@hotmail.com)
- GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.: [Kowalskimike@comcast.net](mailto:Kowalskimike@comcast.net)
- KANSAS CITY: [kcsa@workernet.org](mailto:kcsa@workernet.org) (816) 221-3638
- LOUISVILLE / LEXINGTON, KY.: [redlotus51@yahoo.com](mailto:redlotus51@yahoo.com), (502) 451-2193
- MADISON, WIS.: [Northlandiguana@gmail.com](mailto:Northlandiguana@gmail.com)
- MANKATO, MINN.: [Misshbradford@yahoo.com](mailto:Misshbradford@yahoo.com)
- MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL: (612) 802-1482, [socialistaction@visi.com](mailto:socialistaction@visi.com)

- NEW YORK CITY: (212) 781-5157
- PHILADELPHIA: [philly.socialistaction@gmail.com](mailto:philly.socialistaction@gmail.com)
- PORTLAND, ORE.: (503) 233-1629 [gary1917@aol.com](mailto:gary1917@aol.com)
- PROVIDENCE: [ADGAGNERI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ADGAGNERI@GMAIL.COM) (401) 419-1706
- SALEM, ORE.: [ANNMONTAGUE@COMCAST.NET](mailto:ANNMONTAGUE@COMCAST.NET)
- SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: P.O. Box 10328, OAKLAND, CA 94610 (510) 268-9429, [sfsocialistaction@gmail.com](mailto:sfsocialistaction@gmail.com)
- WASHINGTON, DC: [christopher.towne@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.towne@gmail.com), (202) 286-5493

**SOCIALIST ACTION CANADA**  
NATIONAL OFFICE  
526 Roxton Road, Toronto, Ont. M6G 3R4, (416) 535-8779  
[www.socialistaction-canada.blogspot.com](http://www.socialistaction-canada.blogspot.com)

# Another look at the ILWU Longview strike

BY JEFF MACKLER

Real victories in today's labor movement are few and far between. Indeed, there are none over the past 40 years or so, especially in the U.S., that were powerful enough to stop the crisis-ridden system of exploitation and oppression in its tracks and open the door for a labor offensive capable of inspiring millions to take on the bosses head on and win.

The very modest "victories" that we have seen have been at best partial. Most have consisted of defensive battles aimed at preventing the worst of the ruling-class efforts to roll back the major advances of the past and keep a semblance of the hard-won gains that were codified in union contracts.

To challenge the worldwide and all-pervasive capitalist offensive today requires a qualitatively higher level of working-class organization, solidarity, and leadership than currently exists or has ever existed. But history demonstrates time and again that, while no one can predict where or when the first major battles will take place, when they do break out they will involve a fundamental break with the past—including the formation of new working-class organizations, new alliances with the oppressed, a qualitatively revitalized and expanded trade-union movement born of splits and unifications, and the emergence of a new and fighting leadership armed with a program to win and dedicated to taking on the boss class and all its institutions.

The hammer blows inflicted today will inevitably give rise to an unprecedented fightback, which will shake the very foundations of the capitalist system itself. In the meantime, it is essential that socialists prepare the organizational and political ground to help lead the 99% when their growing consciousness of the source of their misery begins to crystallize and real victories are within reach.

It is in this context that a second look is in order at the hard-fought battle of Washington state ILWU Local 21 members to defeat the concerted union-busting efforts of multi-billion-dollar grain exporters, local and state police, reactionary courts, and an Obama-ordered Coast Guard military mobilization.

"ILWU Local 21 Victory! Longview port workers set an example for the entire labor movement" was the headline of an account by this writer of Local 21's heroic struggle that ended in late February 2012 with a union contract. Unfortunately, when we went to press, the terms of the contract were still unknown. We did know that ILWU Local 21 had won a contract—one that the boss class sought to deny them as part of their long-term effort to challenge the unionization of West Coast ports. We knew that all scabs had been removed from the new \$200 billion, state-of-the-art ENG Corporation's grain facility in Longview and that the intended scab ship, its scab tug boat, and Obama-ordered Coast Guard escorts had departed from the region. We knew that Local 21 members were to be hired at the previously scab-operated facility.

Most important, we knew that this was achieved beginning with the mobilization of Local 21's ranks, a small group of some 250 members, only some 40 of whom were slated to work at the new plant. ILWU members from the unionized ports in Seattle, Portland, and other nearby areas aided them.

These courageous workers gave an accounting of themselves that inspired sections of the labor movement and its allies. In pitched battles, scab-operated trucks and trains loaded with grain from the nation's heartland were challenged and/or stopped dead. Tons of grain were dumped onto the tracks. The forces of repression were challenged head on, and sometimes with firm "movement away to safety" by the fighting union ranks. In court the employers later called this "kidnapping."

The boss retaliated with mass force, arresting hundreds. Fines exceeding \$1 million were levied. The workers responded with appeals sent nationwide for support and solidarity. Labor councils throughout the immediate area and beyond responded with reinforcements and financial aid, as did the ILWU top leadership—the latter mostly in toothless proclamations whose militant language often masked stern warnings against extending the Longview struggle to all West Coast ports.

Local 21's fighters were given critical boosts when the Oakland Occupy movement twice shut down the Oakland port in solidarity and successfully mobilized to close ports in other cities as well. About 20,000 mobilized by Occupy Oakland closed that port for a day.



Don Ryan / AP



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

(Above) ILWU striker Mike Fuqua speaks to UNAC national conference on March 24.

(Left) A union worker blocks a grain train in Longview, Wash., in September 2011.

The combination of union and Occupy forces, especially in Oakland, Seattle and Portland, proved to be decisive when a national mobilization was, in effect, jointly called to meet the government-escorted scab ship sent to load grain from the Longview facility.

It was only at this point that Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire, who had rejected union efforts to mediate some dozen times, decided, obviously in collaboration with the Obama administration, that it was not to their advantage to risk the spectacle of thousands of workers and their allies confronting federal, state, and local police and related militarized forces. In the context of an angry working class, with a clearer focus than in decades on the culpability of the ruling rich in their misery, government officials, headed by Gregoire, decided that their chances of inflicting a major blow against the ILWU were greater at the bargaining table than on the picket lines. In that manner, a negotiated "settlement" was reached.

It took weeks for the terms of the settlement to become widely known, and indeed, the details continued to be negotiated long after scabs were ordered from the plant, the union pickets were taken down, and the government's forces of repression were removed.

The final contract, approved by the ranks (by all reports) under threat of reprisal from the ILWU bureaucracy should it be rejected, were quite different than most workers and their allies had expected. ILWU Local 21 was recognized as the bargaining agent, and a contract was signed, but it was far different and qualitatively weaker than the contracts of most ILWU locals in the grain handlers' industry.

While most ILWU locals have a union hiring hall to dispatch workers in seniority order to the workplace, the contract was not at all clear about where final authority on this issue resided. The contract excluded ILWU members from working in the new facility's central control room, a contract provision previously insisted on by Local 21.

The hated 12-hour or perhaps 12 1/2-hour shift was included in the new contract. While some locals had already acceded to this shift, it was far from the norm in the industry. Equally important, the new contract did not include an "amnesty clause," the traditional agreement in ILWU contracts that all company charges against union members would be dropped. Worse still, the contract's expiration date was set so as to not coincide with ILWU locals in the same industry. Thus, the bosses achieved their first fracturing of the bargaining unit. This always operates to the detriment of any union local because it is compelled to negotiate without the combined power of the entire union behind it.

The above concessions were extracted from Local 21 members under pressure from their "international" leadership, whose role in the long battle more

often than not was to thwart the full mobilization of the ILWU ranks—citing their "obligations" under the "slave-labor" Taft Hartley law—in support of Local 21. This included warnings and threats of reprisals against ILWU locals that collaborated with Occupy groups. Some ILWU local officers went so far as to act as thugs in efforts to break up or disrupt Portland and Seattle Occupy meetings that had been called to mobilize solidarity for Local 21 when the scab ship was expected to arrive.

What Local 21 and its leadership had achieved on the picket lines up and down the state, and in Longview, was in significant part undone by ILWU's hidebound bureaucracy. In the end, the significantly demobilized Local 21, threatened with million-dollar fines that the ILWU tops implied or stated would not be paid, saw no alternative but to accept the settlement, in great part negotiated by the international in collaboration with the anti-union Washington governor.

One of Local 21's proudest and most courageous rank-and-file fighters, Mike Fuqua, was invited to be a keynote speaker at the recent Stamford, Conn., conference of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC). The hundreds of activists in the hall accorded Fuqua a standing ovation. Virtually everyone saw him as the expression of a union local that had stood firm against great odds and at great risk to the bosses' offensive. Fuqua, one of the few Local 21 activists who voted against the contract, was a living example of working people who stand up to challenge the insults that are inflicted daily, and who fight to win.

Fuqua termed the settlement a "partial victory," stemming not so much from of the terms of the contract, but because of the fighting spirit and unity of the ranks, which was transmitted across the country. It was far better to have fought a good fight and lost than to have not fought at all—a maxim that will ring true in the initial skirmishes today that will lead to the major class battles ahead. ■

## Minneapolis May Day march

On May 1, people gathered in the Latino neighborhood of Minneapolis and marched through the main immigrant business sector, to end at a local park for a rally. Police estimated 2000 participants (compared to 400 last year). The crowd was probably about one-third Latino immigrants.

MIRAc (the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee) spent over three months organizing the march. There were over 50 endorsing organizations, including unions (AFSCME, HERE, SEIU, UTU, and others).

Aztec dancers led the march. The marchers made stops along the route to target local campaigns, including Kmart (where cleaning workers are organizing), Wells Fargo, the police precinct, and the local DMV (where immigrants are organizing a campaign for a municipal ID).

The rally included speakers from the Latino, Asian, and Somali immigrant communities, Occupy, Committee to Stop FBI Repression, unions, and other activist groups. — LISA LUINENBURG



# Big May Day turnout in New York City

By MARTY GOODMAN

NEW YORK—May 1 was a day of celebration, rage, and solidarity. Taking to the streets for International Worker's Day were some 10,000 to 20,000 mostly working-class New Yorkers. Dozens of May Day actions culminated in a big rally and march from Union Square in lower Manhattan. The march went south on Broadway to Wall Street, the capital of the 1%.

May Day was organized by a new coalition of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, some 40 endorsing trade unions, the May First Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights, and other immigrant and community organizations. A national call by anarchist forces within and without OWS for a general strike failed to materialize.

In November, billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg and the New York Police Department evicted OWS from its Zuccotti Park home near Wall Street. But on May Day they found that they could not kill the spirit of Occupy Wall Street. Winter is over, "let freedom spring" was the message!

The NYPD, scandalized by revelations of illegal spying on peaceful antiwar and Muslim activists, arrested some 85 protesters on May Day. The charges were mostly misdemeanors, with a handful of more seri-

ous charges. There were several arrests at a "wildcat" march on the Lower East Side, where anarchists overturned garbage cans.

The May Day protesters were in large part an ethnically diverse outpouring of workers unaffiliated with unions that are tied to the Democratic Party. Workers, both immigrant and non-immigrant, and youth, many of whom face astronomical student loan debts, were turned on by the militant confrontational style of OWS.

The mile-long May Day parade was led by five taxis driven by members of the Taxi Workers Alliance, which represents thousands of drivers. Close behind was Transport Workers Union Local 100, which represents 38,000 New York subway and bus workers. Local 100 was the first union to publicly defend OWS; it initiated two large rallies last October and November in defense of OWS that rivaled or exceeded May 1.

Local 100 helped prevent the first major cop attempt to dislodge OWS from Zuccotti Park by mobilizing its staff. In October, the TWU filed a court injunction to stop the NYPD from forcing union bus drivers to haul to jail on city buses 700 OWS protesters. The injunction failed. However, union contingents at the rally were modest. Local 100's contingent of up to 100 was perhaps the largest. Other endorsing unions included 32 BJ, Communications Workers of America Local 1180,

the Laborers Union, 1199 SEIU, the Professional Staff Congress, and the United Federation of Teachers. Activists on the ground saw the union leadership as giving May Day less than a full effort, despite pledges of money and resources.

The march ended with a short rally near Wall St. at an office of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). The MTA is threatening Local 100, Teamster commuter rail workers, and others with contract zeros, massive concessions, and possible layoffs. Last year, the MTA paid out over \$2 billion in debt payments to Wall Street banks and wealthy owners of MTA Bonds, most of whom are paid in tax-free income by mostly working-class riders.

Many of the May Day marchers were immigrant workers who are fighting discrimination and for full legalization. The crucial role of immigrants' labor was on full display in 2006, when one to two million workers, mostly immigrants, protested or simply walked off the job on May 1—the biggest strike-protest in U.S. history!

Under the Obama administration there have been more deportations than ever. The limited immigrant turnout on May Day was due in part to NYPD and media-hyped threats of violence, stoking fears of deportation. Moreover, immigrant leaders loyal to the Democratic Party refused to mobilize. Nevertheless, hundreds of immigrant rights activists from many countries gathered for a noon to 4 p.m. rally and cultural event in Union Square sponsored by the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

Results fell short of the projected "99 Pickets" for May Day but there were dozens of militant actions. Protesters were dispatched from Bryant Park in Midtown, where OWS set up a home base for literature tables, food, and teach-ins. A morning picket at the Bank of America Tower, Chase Bank, and other symbols of the 1% drew hundreds. Rank-and-file postal workers, who face up to 200,000 layoffs nationally, held a modest rally in front of the General Post Office.

Roving picket lines were organized by the Restaurant Organizing Committee (ROC) in support of the mostly immigrant workers who face discrimination and low wages. Demonstrators picketed several Midtown restaurants and the Wells Fargo bank, which profits from low farm-worker wages. Chipote restaurant was targeted in solidarity with the campaign of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers for better pay and conditions for Florida farm workers who pick tomatoes. Organized by Break the Chains, about 250 demonstrators picketed outside the office of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), protesting attacks on immigrant workers. At Madison Square Park some 200 participated in a "Free University," with classes from city colleges and universities.

A loose alliance of labor activists has been formed called the "OWS Labor Assembly," which includes the Labor Outreach Committee, Occupy Your Workplace, Occupy the DOE (Department of Education), Immigrant Worker Justice, Arts and Labor, and the Rank and File Committee. The unity among the May Day forces is important but it's clear that the official union movement's ties to the Democratic Party will remain a serious break on struggle. The effort to include an antiwar plank in the May Day platform of demands, finally adopted at the end, is only one example.

The crisis of capitalism is far from over. Rebel youth in OWS, worker militants, and immigrants must continue to mobilize and organize. We say, "All day, all week, occupy Wall Street!" ■

## Immigrants' rights marches in Arizona, Oregon

By GEORGE SHRIVER

TUCSON, Ariz.—On May Day (International Workers' Day), the march and rally for immigrants' and other workers' rights was smaller than in previous years, only about 500. In contrast, in 2006, nearly 20,000 marched in Tucson on April 10, and about the same number two years ago, to protest Arizona's racial profiling law, SB 1070, which was signed by the Arizona governor on the eve of May Day that year.

Among the likely reasons for this drop-off in numbers is the economic downturn, making jobs more scarce and people less willing to take a day off work to demonstrate on a workday.

Also, a higher level of intimidation undoubtedly plays a role, the impact of unending racist attacks on Mexican Americans and undocumented workers in general. The Obama administration openly boasts that it has deported unprecedented numbers of undocumented immigrants during Obama's time in office.

The Mexican American community

here suffered another hard blow this year. It has been deprived of the Mexican American Studies program in the Tucson public schools, a program that the community won about 20 years ago and which was helping alienated youth find something to identify with in school.

Participants in the Raza Studies program had a higher rate of staying in school, graduating, and going on to higher education—against a background of disproportionately high dropout rates among Mexican American youth.

Among the speakers at the May 1 rally were two teachers from the now closed MAS (Mexican American Studies) program. One said, "There is a lot of fear out there right now." This was caused by hard-line school officials, who threaten and carry out reprisals against student protesters, backed up by police attacks.

The speaker said that though the authorities have kicked out the MAS program for now, "we'll be back!" The other teacher who spoke, Maria, stressed that they were fighting for future generations, not only those in school right now. Richard Elias, an elected public offi-

cial from Tucson's Mexican community, vowed that the four out of five School Board members who voted to shut down the MAS program will be ousted, and that new people who support an MAS program will have to be voted in.

Union support for the march and rally was expressed by Sue Hay of SEIU Local 48 and Mike Corrio of AFSCME. There was a new layer of support this year, a large presence of Occupy Tucson activists. A diverse array of community groups and social movements supported the event, including a speaker from Wingspan, the local LGBT organization, and three little girls who sang a song in Nahuatl, one of the native languages of pre-European Mexico. ■

By ANN MONTAGUE

SALEM, Ore.—About 2000 people attended "The Light of Hope March And Rally: A Celebration Of Working Families, Regardless Of Immigration Status." The event was sponsored by Causa Oregon, PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos Del Noroeste) Oregon's Farm Work-

er Union, Vos Hispana Causa Chavista, Mujeres Luchadores Progresista, Willamette University Causa Chapter, Oregon AFL-CIO. The only visible union representation was from OSEA (AFT) and SEIU. The rally began at 6 p.m. at the State Capitol.

The numbers appeared to be the same as last year, and the main issue remains the same, "Restore Driver's Licenses For All!" In 2008 a state law was passed which requires proof of legal residency. Last year there was a lot of anger that the Democrats had dropped legislation that would have granted a special driver's license to allow driving privileges to those who could not produce a birth certificate. Most of the signs, banners and buttons reflected this issue.

Governor Kitzhaber was scheduled to speak, but instead a statement was read that he promises to convene a work group of "civic leaders" to address this issue. He admitted that thousands of people with current driver's licenses could not renew their licenses. He said he would like the law to change but did not give any specifics.

The marchers left the Capitol chanting, "What do we want? Driver's Licenses! When do we want them? Now!" ■

By VIJAY PRASHAD

Vijay Prasad is professor of international studies at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., and author of at least 14 books on world affairs. This article is based on a portion of the presentation that Prasad gave on March 25 at the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) conference in Stamford, Conn. Prasad's book published last month, "Arab Spring, Libyan Winter" (AK Press) includes material that expands on the themes of this article.

Reports by independent Arab human rights organizations and the UN Human Rights Council (published March 2) document the human rights violations in Libya since February 2011. They show us that it was indeed the case that the Qaddafi regime conducted crimes against humanity and, when the war began, war crimes.

But what the UN report also shows us is that the regime was not conducting genocide. That word was casually thrown around in February and March, egging on to war a public worried about what people in the Obama administration began to call a "Srebrenica on steroids" (referring to the Bosnian town where a massacre was committed in July 1995).

It is also the case, as the reports show, that the rebels committed both crimes against humanity and war crimes, with no prospect of any prosecutions of these fighters who are now allies of the states that are members of NATO.

There will be no formal investigation into the ethnic cleansing of the town of Tawerga, where tens of thousands of dark-skinned Libyans have been removed by a section of the rebels who go under the name of "the brigade for purging slave and black skin." There has been little outrage about the making of this "ghost town," as Andrew Gilligan called it in the London *Telegraph* (August 2011). The human rights regime has been applied unevenly: against the enemies of NATO, but not against its allies.

What is most startling about the UN report is what it reveals about the role of NATO. The report asks for an investigation of NATO's potential war crimes, but is snubbed by the military alliance, whose lawyer, Peter Olsen, wrote in February of this year to the UN Commission "that, in the event the Commission elects to include a discussion of NATO actions in Libya, its report clearly states that NATO did not deliberately target civilians and did not commit war crimes in Libya." In other words, it is impossible for NATO to commit war crimes. NATO, unlike the Libyans, is too civilized to be guilty of any such violations. It is, therefore, above investigation.

The scandal here is that NATO, a military alliance, refuses any civilian oversight of its actions. It operated under a UN mandate (Security Council Resolution 1973) and yet refuses to allow a UN evaluation of its actions. NATO, in other words, operates as a rogue military entity, outside the bounds of the prejudices of democratic society. It is precisely because NATO refuses an evaluation that the UN Security Council will not allow another NATO-like military intervention.

As I show in my new book, NATO's intervention into

# LIBYA'S SHADOW

Jonathan Sunderman / U.S. Navy



(Above) USS Barry launches Tomahawk missile toward the coast of Libya on March 19, 2011.

Libya had motives far from those of the concerns of human rights and protection of civilians. If civilians were the first priority, the NATO states would welcome an investigation into the many allegations of civilian deaths because of NATO bombardment (Chris Chivers and Eric Schmitt's lone report in *The New York Times*, Dec. 17, bears the headline, "In Strikes on Libya by NATO, an Unspoken Civilian Toll"). But they do not.

If protection of civilians was not the main war aim, what was it? Certainly access to the sweet oil of Libya was one motivation. Another was political. The Arab Spring was an indictment of Western-backed dictators (from Tunisia's Ben Ali to Egypt's Mubarak onward, and most threateningly to the Gulf monarchies). The Libyan campaign was an attempt by the West to insinuate NATO as an agent for Good and not as a bulwark for Dictatorships. Protection of civilians fell low on the totem of NATO's operation. The politics were far more important than the human rights.

A U.S. military study conducted by the Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis division of the Joint Staff J7 shows that the U.S. bore the burden of the Libyan war,

behind the NATO shield. The same study indicates that the U.S. war planners at the African Command "were unsure as to whether 'regime change' was an intended option, or whether operations were to be focused solely on protecting civilian life and providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees."

The UN mandate was for the latter, but the confusion allowed the U.S. and NATO to pursue expanded war aims. This allowed NATO military force to bombard cities, including Tripoli in May and June of last year (as Simon Denyer of the *Washington Post* put it from Tripoli in early June, "silence in Tripoli after day-long NATO bombardment"). This inflation of the mandate also gives pause to the UN, whose failure to fully evaluate who ran the military operation and how targets were chosen based on the various mandates means that they are reluctant to go into another such mission that gives NATO *carte blanche*.

Libya is the shadow that hangs over Syria. ■

## ... May 20 protest

(continued from page 1)

unpopular, and Afghan troops will hardly be able to take over military responsibilities from the U.S. occupiers anytime soon. But the European governments, beset by economic crisis, are finding strong grassroots opposition to their continued participation in the Afghan morass.

President-elect François Hollande of France has stated that his country's troops would be withdrawn at the end of this year. Accordingly, both President Obama and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen have scheduled appointments with Hollande before the NATO summit in order to try to draw him back in the fold on the Afghanistan question. Hollande, for his part, has noted that he would "not make things difficult for Barack Obama." In a May 7 news conference, he praised Obama on foreign policy and said that he also saw potential areas of agreement with Obama on economic issues.

Europe's economic difficulties provide the background for both the NATO and the G8 meetings. There are more and more signs that the euro zone as a whole is falling into a new recession; unemployment in Western Europe is at its highest point in over a decade. Britain has recently joined half a dozen other European nations in entering a double-dip recession (two successive quarters of negative growth).

Government austerity policies have served to augment the economic slowdowns and unemployment throughout Europe. France's President-elect Hollande has tried to allay anxieties over the renewed crisis with talk of restoring government "growth" policies—subsidies to boost production, a slight expansion of the social safety net, and higher taxes on the wealthy. But

he appears to be on a collision course with other EU leaders over his plan to renegotiate the bloc's fiscal pact. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has warned that reopening talks on the pact, endorsed by 25 EU governments in March, would be impossible. These are some of the inter-imperialist tensions that the G8 meeting will have to sort out, which also carry over into NATO.

The G8 and NATO summits will also explore, of course, the interests of the imperialist countries in increasing their exploitation of Africa and other areas of the neo-colonial world—and how they might share the booty. Accordingly, the heads of state of four African states—Ghana, Benin, Tanzania, and Ethiopia—have been invited to sit as guests at the G8 Camp David meeting.

One item on the agenda will be "food security" concerns, which will no doubt involve wrangling over how to best allow Western countries to dump their subsidized food surpluses into African countries that have seen their own agricultural resources remolded for the purpose of mono-crop cultivation for export.

In contrast to the wheeling and dealing of the imperialists will be the People's Summit in Chicago. People who are opposed to the pro-war and anti-people policies of the corporate rich are invited to take part in their own conference, on Saturday and Sunday, May 12-13—one week before the May 20 mass march. There will be large plenary sessions as well as more than 40 workshops to provide everyone the opportunity to engage in dialogue about the pressing issues facing the world.

Speakers will include Malalai Joya, former Afghan member of parliament and internationally renowned opponent of NATO's occupation of Afghanistan; the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rainbow/PUSH coalition; Reiner Braun, International Coordinating Committee of the European No to NATO network; Kathy Kelly, Voices

for Creative Nonviolence; death row prisoner Mumia Abu Jamal via speakerphone; Malik Mujahid, Muslim Peace Coalition; Medea Benjamin, Code Pink; and Col. Ann Wright (ret.), antiwar activist.

All Out to Chicago! No to NATO and War! ■

### Hunger in Bahrain, Palestine

Knowing the shaky ground on which it stands, the Bahraini regime continues its intransigent repression against all opposition, including continued ignoring of pleas by supporters of leading dissident Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja for his release. Al-Khawaja has been on hunger strike since Feb. 8, and his family reported in early May that he was being force-fed through an IV. The opposition mounted protests against the Formula One Grand Prix auto race held in Bahrain on April 22.

Meanwhile, 1000 Palestinian political prisoners launched a hunger strike on April 17, Palestinian Prisoners' Day. By press time their number had swelled to 2000. The prisoners are demanding an end to isolation and solitary confinement, administrative detention/imprisonment without charge, and access to family visits, education, and media. Several strikers have been without food for over two months, the point at which death could come at any moment.

Israel's government has responded to the strike with brutal retaliation, including further repressive measures against the prisoners as well as beatings and arrests of protesting supporters outside the prisons. For information on how to support the prisoners, see [samidoun.ca](http://samidoun.ca).

— ANDREW POLLACK

# Revolution in Spain: 1937



## Anarchism fails its grand test

By ANDREW POLLACK

Seventy-five years ago this May, the workers of Barcelona fought valiantly to defend their revolution against an attempt by a Popular Front government of capitalist, Stalinist, and anarchist parties to crush it. In the end the workers lost, and a massive wave of repression was launched to pave the way for Spain's ruling class to recover the properties that had been seized by the country's workers and peasants.

This anniversary would be worth noting for no other reason than the heroism of millions of Spanish fighters against capitalism and fascism, and for the example they set of a potentially successful overthrow of the system—much as we remember the Paris Commune of 1871 even though it too went down to defeat.

But we also need to draw from the Barcelona battles, and from events surrounding them, the correct lessons for revolutionary strategy today. With mass demonstrations and general strikes occurring one after another throughout the Middle East and Europe (including Spain), and an Occupy movement sweeping the U.S.—but without a successful overthrow of capitalism yet occurring in any one of these countries—the lessons of Spain are more salient than ever.

This is particularly so because of the advice of anarchists and academics to follow some of the same policies that doomed the Spanish Revolution: recommendations to avoid taking power (e.g. John Holloway, Marina Sitrin, the Zapatistas, etc.), to not seek to build a revolutionary party, to avoid coordinating and centralizing actions, for “diversity of tactics,” “horizontalism” and “autonomy”—in short, the classic anarchist menu for avoiding strategic and programmatic responsibility.

The Spanish Revolution also provides a cautionary tale about the dangers of centrist parties, i.e., those trying to straddle the gap between reform and revolution. This is becoming more relevant once again as revolutionaries and ex-revolutionaries try to decide how to relate to new parties that attempt to regroup a broad array of political forces.

In this article we focus on the betrayals and mistakes of the anarchists, i.e., the leadership of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Labour, or CNT) and Federación Anarquista Ibérica (Iberian Anarchist Federation, or FAI) and the centrists, i.e. the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, or POUM). Because it is so well documented elsewhere—and

much less of an immediate danger in today's movements—we address the counterrevolutionary role of the Stalinists (the Communist Party) in Spain mostly through the prism of how the CNT/FAI's and POUM's lack of strategy hamstrung the fight against Stalinism.

### Spain under dual power

The largest forces in the Spanish labor movement were the Socialist-dominated Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT, General Union of Workers) and the anarchist-led CNT (led by the FAI). In Catalonia, the UGT was soon to be led by the Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, or PSUC), the result of a merger between the Socialist and Communist Parties.

The strategic and ideological weaknesses of the anarchists were manifest in their role in the upsurge that blossomed in the first years of the Republic. The militant actions that their members led in various parts of the country were undertaken without coordination, without any attempt to fit them into a strategy to unify and politicize the swelling revolt of a radicalizing proletariat and peasantry. Instead, this militancy was frittered away in isolated, easily repressed incidents. And these disorganized actions were rationalized theoretically by the CNT's insistence on “federalism,” i.e. the inviolable right of each unit to make its own decisions.

An anarchist official quoted in Burnett Bolloten's “The Spanish Civil War” stated: “Within the CNT everyone had his own opinion, everyone acted according to his own judgment, the leaders were ceaselessly criticized and challenged, the autonomy of the regional federations was inviolable, just as the autonomy of the local federations and unions was inviolable within the regional federations. To get a decision accepted ... a militant had to exhaust himself making speeches, personal contacts, moving from place to place. Among the libertarians the ballot was repugnant; the unanimity they sought required interminable debates.” Such was the leadership nominally at the head of the radicalizing masses in Catalonia when the fascist rebellion broke out.

When Gen. Francisco Franco's troops revolted in July 1936, the bourgeois government froze in paralysis. But the masses of workers and peasants moved immediately to organize neighborhood and workplace armed units to put down the fascist revolt and to weed out their collaborators in the cities and rural areas where the fascists had been put down. The fascists gained control only in those parts of the country where the

defense of the Republic was left in the hands of bourgeois parties.

In a matter of days these armed workers and peasants had begun to construct a new order in the areas they controlled. With virtually every body of the Popular Front government having ceased to function, the new worker and peasant committees took over most government and economic tasks. On July 19, workers stormed the military garrison in Barcelona, taking control of it. For months afterward, a state of dual power existed in Spain, in which the Popular Front government had to share power with the armed masses.

### Anarchists join bourgeois gov't

Anarchism's traditional position toward states—and the basis of their professed superiority in matters of democracy over Marxists—was one of absolute refusal to recognize any state's authority, and certainly not to participate in them. Yet in the very first days after the uprising that threw back the fascist rebellion, CNT leaders were dickering with the Popular Front for seats in a reorganized government.

Nowhere is the story of the anarchists' entry into the corridors of bourgeois power better told than in the account by CNT leader J. García Oliver in “The Revolutionary Institutions: The Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias.” Oliver describes a CNT delegation visiting Luis Companys, head of the Generalidad, the Catalan wing of the Popular Front government. (Companys belonged to La Esquerra Catalana, the Catalan Left, a bourgeois nationalist party.) Companys told his visitors: “You've won. Everything is in your hands. If you do not want or need me as president of Catalonia, tell me now, so that I can become another soldier in the war against fascism.”

At the meeting of the Catalan Regional Committee of the CNT, anarchist leader (and later Popular Front government member) Federica Montseny rejected the idea of the new grassroots committees taking power “because the installation of an anarchist dictatorship, because it was a dictatorship, could never be anarchist.” The CNT voted with only one dissent its support of Companys' government.

By early 1937, the state being propped up by the Anarchists was confident that through the collaboration of the CNT they had sufficiently weakened the position of the revolutionary workers and peasants to try to decisively reverse the revolution's momentum. Barcelona was chosen as the battleground.

### The May Days in Barcelona

Felix Morrow in his article “The War in Spain” (*New Internationalist*, February 1938), neatly summarizes the context, the unfolding, and the theoretical conclusions to be drawn from the May Days:

“The workers and peasants had signified in the very first days of the civil war their desire to end capitalism by their seizures of the land and factories. Only naked counter-revolutionary terrorism could hurl back the masses: and the bourgeois-Stalinist bloc openly took the road of counter-revolution. And the Barcelona proletariat rose to halt the counter-revolution—and those whom they looked to for leadership joined the counter-revolution in tearing down the barricades.

“On the barricades anarchist workers tore up copies of the anarchist press appealing to them to leave the streets, and shook their fists and guns at the loud speakers from which came the voice of their leaders exhorting them to disperse. The CNT leaders did not hesitate to denounce the left wing anarchists—the Friends of Durruti—as agents provocateurs. Camillo Berneri, spiritual head of Italian anarchism, died under the stiletto points of Stalinist assassins while his erstwhile friends, Montseny, Garcia Oliver, etc., were handing over the Barcelona proletariat to his executioners.

“The government representatives had promised  
(continued on page 7)



(continued from page 6)

that if CNT troops did not come from the front, the government would not bring troops into Barcelona; the government broke its promise; and the CNT leaders ... suppressed the news that government troops were on the way. The government violated its agreement with the CNT for the withdrawal of both sides from the Telephone Building; so the CNT leaders suppressed the news that the government had occupied the building! While one terrible event after another piled up to reveal that the government was utilizing the peace pact with the CNT leaders to carry through its counter-revolutionary repressions, the CNT leaders occupied themselves with issuing manifestos to calm the masses. And when the government had broken all its promises, the CNT leaders came fawningly to ask more promises, none of which was ever kept...

"Hitherto, in the history of the working class, anarchism has never been tested on a grand scale. Now, leading great masses, it has received a definitive test."

Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué, in "The 'May Days' of 1937 in Barcelona," describes how the anarchists and their centrist followers snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. He quotes a POUM leader: "No one denies that the situation was favourable for liquidating the undertaking and the forces of the PSUC. However, despite the enthusiasm of its youth section, the CNT maintained its waiting stance of 'protestation,' and the POUM did not want to be isolated from it."

We can hear the same story, of retreat counseled and defeat rationalized, in the words of CNT public relations chief Augustin Souchy in his "The Tragic Week in May": "The CNT acted loyally toward the anti-fascist cause when the new government was formed. It wanted to stop fighting among the political parties. ... By eleven o'clock in the morning [of May 3] the delegates of the CNT unions were holding a special meeting where they agreed to do everything possible to re-establish calm. A special committee was elected to negotiate with the government for a solution to the conflict."

"The CNT issued appeals to both sides: 'Workers of the CNT and the UGT! Remember the road we have travelled together... Put down your weapons! Embrace as brothers! ... We must work to beat fascism!'"

Souchy admits that "the anarchists could also have called in their columns from the front, as well as armed forces from other parts of Catalonia, and there is no doubt that they could have been victorious within 24 hours. But they did not want to break up the anti-fascist front."

#### The POUM tails the CNT

And what of the POUM? They were the first targets of the Stalinist-led repression. But tragically their own policy had disarmed the workers, both theoretically and literally, setting the stage for that repression.

Felix Morrow, in his "Proposed Solutions to the Spanish Crisis" (*Socialist Appeal*, January 1937), wrote: "The POUM's entry into the Peoples Front Government set up on September 26th left no revolutionary force to continue the campaign for a revolutionary war against fascism. ... The POUM could not both be in the government and build independent workers' organs of action, nor could the POUM carry on a consistent campaign for the revolutionary slogans—land to the peasants, workers control of production, freedom for Morocco, etc. etc.—which were completely alien to the POUM-endorsed cabinet."

The POUM shared the CNT's lack of shame in admitting the opportunities it had voluntarily foregone. Thus POUM leader Andrés Nin, in "The May Days in Barcelona, May 1937," could write: "Our party has repeatedly insisted ... on the need to provide a political solution to the problems which have arisen during the war and revolution. We even declared that the working class could take power without the need to resort to armed insurrection: it would be enough to bring its enormous influence into play for the relationship of forces to decide in its favour, to achieve a workers' and

peasants' government without violence of any kind [!]. Failure to confront the problem in these terms, on the political plane, would sooner or later produce a violent explosion, of the accumulated anger of the working class and, as a result, a movement that would be spontaneous, chaotic and lacking in immediate perspectives."

In fact, the POUM's policies facilitated that very end, i.e. "a violent explosion ... lacking in immediate perspectives"—but one in which the Stalinists handed power back to the ruling class and launched a murderous repression against the POUM and CNT.

Yet Nin, like Souchy, admits workers could have seized power: "... it would have been possible [for the workers] to take power. But our party, as a minority force within the workers' movement, could not take the responsibility of issuing such a slogan given the attitude of the leaders of the CNT. ... In these circumstances, to call on the workers to take power would inevitably have been to launch a putsch which would have had fatal consequences for the proletariat ... we advised the workers to abandon the fight and return to work."

#### Roots of betrayals in anarchist theory

In their March 1938 article "Anarchist Tactics in Spain," the editors of *The New Internationalist*, the monthly journal of the U.S. Trotskyist movement, uncovered the source of the seemingly mysterious flip-flop of the anarchists vis-à-vis their relationship to the state: "Anarchism ... is based upon a petty bourgeois idealistic conception of the state. The bourgeoisie admonishes the workers: Don't take power, it is corrupting by its very nature. The anarchists echo this warning. The state is not a class organ to them; it is, per se, Evil Incarnate, regardless of what class is in power. ...

"It is not surprising, then, that when the concrete 'emergencies' of real life jerk the anarchists out of the blue sky of abstraction; when, as a mass movement

**'It is impossible to lead the masses toward insurrection without preparing for the conquest of power.'**

**— Leon Trotsky**

imminently imperiled by fascism, they find themselves forced to employ all the weapons of power they can lay hands on, including the most concentrated weapon of power, namely, the machinery of state—they do not try to create such a political weapon in a new (proletarian) form but simply fall back upon it in its existing (bourgeois) form."

What of the left-anarchist FOD? Did they draw the right conclusions from their leaders' betrayals? One key source is George Fontenis, "The revolutionary message of the Friends of Durruti" (dedicated to Buenaventura Durruti, the Spanish anarchist leader who was killed in 1936). In a preface to this work, Daniel Guerin describes the politics to which the FOD was reacting: "the infantile idyll of a jumble of 'free communes,' at the heart of the Spanish CNT before 1936. ... This soft dream left Spanish anarcho-syndicalism extremely ill-prepared for the harsh realities of revolution and civil war on the eve of Franco's putsch."

Fontenis too traces the roots of the FOD to the weaknesses of the CNT and the FAI. He describes an internal opposition that opposed "the superficial analysis, the simplistic and catastrophic conception of revolution, the cult of violence for its own sake, which seemed to them to be characteristic of the militants of the FAI..."

"Certainly, it was far from being true that all the members of the FAI were hooligans. However, it is true that adventurist revolutionary attempts had been attempted and were to be attempted in the period that followed, at the instigation, or with the support of some groups of the FAI. These attempts were doomed to failure and resulted in fierce repression."

Their later entry into a bourgeois government is traced by Fontenis to similar flaws: "We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the Spanish anarchist movement, while it was predominantly working class, was not immune from some of the weaknesses of the international anarchist movement. ... Bourgeois idealism, ill-



(Above) Militia members pose on a home-made tank in Barcelona, 1937.

(Left) Anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti.

defined humanism, the substitution of hollow philosophical talks for solid political reflection, individualism and dilettantism were common especially among the intellectuals. ... The leaders, under the cover of the magic phrases, federalism and autonomy, hung on to power."

The FOD sought, in the midst of battle and with inadequate preparation and cadres, to rectify as best they could these defects and to provide an alternative leadership. On the question of the need for revolutionary theory (against which today's anarchists counterpose the notion that every idea is as good as any other, that we "make the road by walking"—i.e., we discover what we need to do as we go along), the FOD wrote in their newspaper: "Revolutions cannot succeed if they have no guiding lights, no immediate objectives. ... Although it had the strength,

the CNT did not know how to mould and shape the activity that arose spontaneously in the street."

Fontenis reminds his readers that despite the FOD's valiant efforts to chart a new course away from this ideological bankruptcy, "It is certainly true that it isn't easy to create a constructive and critical force in the middle of civil war, coming from a completely insufficient doctrinal basis. They knew practically nothing of the theoretical efforts carried out in the course of the previous decade in the international movement, efforts which nobody else had capitalised on in a coherent whole at that time."

#### Trotsky on Spain

In his 1937 "The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning," Trotsky summarized the role of the anarchists in the revolution: "The Anarchists had no independent position of any kind in the Spanish revolution. All they did was waver between Bolshevism and Menshevism."

The anarchists' claim that "we did not seize power not because we were unable but because we did not wish to, because we were against every kind of dictatorship; and the like," wrote Trotsky, "contains an irrevocable condemnation of anarchism as an utterly anti-revolutionary doctrine. To renounce the conquest of power is voluntarily to leave the power with those who wield it, the exploiters. The essence of every revolution consisted and consists in putting a new class in power, thus enabling it to realize its own program in life. It is impossible to wage war and to reject victory. It is impossible to lead the masses towards insurrection without preparing for the conquest of power."

Trotsky said of the CNT's enablers, the POUM: "The record of the POUM is not much better. In the point of theory, it tried, to be sure, to base itself on the formula of permanent revolution. ... But the revolution

(continued on page 10)



# Gerry Foley

## *A life dedicated to socialist revolution*

BY JEFF MACKLER

**Few revolutionaries, past or present, have devoted their entire adult lives to the socialist cause as full-timers. Gerry Foley was one of them. He died unexpectedly on April 21 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico's poorest state.**

Gerry spent 50 years fighting—at near poverty wages—to free humanity from every form of capitalist barbarity, oppression, and exploitation. He did it with a twinkle in his eye and with an engaging passion for all things human—and thoroughly enjoyed every moment.

Gerry was 73. He died less than a week after moving from his semi-retirement residence in Mérida, Mexico, to San Cristóbal, perhaps from the exertion of moving his enormous collection of books into his newly rented home. His friend Pete, on the scene at the time, told us that Gerry had just left a social event in the large communal area of his apartment complex, where he was chatting with some young people. He returned to his apartment extremely short of breath, immediately collapsed to the ground, and died a few minutes later, likely of a heart attack.

Gerry was among Socialist Action's most dedicated and talented comrades. Those who knew him will immediately recall his generous spirit, depth of knowledge and analysis, brilliance of exposition, love of life in all its diversity, and enduring friendship.

Gerry not only read in about 90 languages; he was fluent in more than a dozen, often serving as translator whenever his skills were required. His uncommon language facility was matched by a deep understanding of the history and culture of each nationality whose language he had mastered. Books were Gerry's sole prized possessions. He had a collection of perhaps 10,000 scattered from California to Alabama to Mexico.

Gerry, fluent in Gaelic, was likely among the most informed revolutionaries on Irish history and politics. The Irish struggle for liberation, no matter the setbacks, was never far from his consciousness. Perhaps the socialist cause of the renowned Irish Marxist and Republican, James Connolly—among his heroes—appropriately expressed Gerry's credo almost 100 years later. Connolly observed that “a real socialist movement can only be born of struggle, of uncompromising affirmation of the faith that is in us. Such a movement infallibly gathers to it every element of rebellion and progress, and in the midst of the storm and stress of struggle solidifies into a real revolutionary force.” In his own talks, Gerry expressed similar sentiments

many times.

Gerry spent over a year in Ireland working with the Irish comrades, including Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, Northern Ireland's fiery socialist leader and the youngest woman elected to the British parliament. As a professional journalist writing articles for the world Trotskyist press, Gerry's insights into Irish politics served to inform the revolutionary politics of a generation of political activists.

Decades later, in 1997, Gerry headed the San Francisco-based Committee to Free Roisin McAliskey, Bernadette's daughter, who was imprisoned and tortured by British authorities as she and her supporters worldwide defeated a German government-initiated deportation effort based on trumped-up charges of involvement in terrorist activities. Then pregnant, Roisin finally won her freedom but not before being forced to have her baby, while in chains, in a filthy British prison facility. Bernadette, who had won the broad respect of U.S. Black liberation activists decades earlier when she gave to the Black Panther Party the “Keys to San Francisco” (awarded to her by San Francisco's Board of Supervisors out of respect for her membership in the British parliament), joined Gerry at mass rallies in defense of her daughter.

During his speeches, and on virtually any subject, tears often came to Gerry's eyes as he inserted an Irish reference into his discourse. The Irish struggle for self-determination, the longest in world history, lasting more than 700 years and still uncompleted, was ingrained in Gerry's consciousness. And if you gave him the opportunity, Gerry would happily recount every major event of those 700 years.

No comrade could match Gerry's deep understanding of the national question—the struggle of oppressed people and nations for self-determination, dignity, and freedom. He was a champion of all oppressed peoples and despised their oppressors with great passion.

Gerry's articles have appeared in socialist periodicals around the world. We will soon be publishing a list of many of them. His spirit and dedication to socialist revolution and to building the Leninist party, the prerequisite instrument for bringing it into being, lives in our party and in its comrades. In his semi-retirement, Gerry remained an honorary member of Socialist Action's Political Committee, often finding time to join its deliberations via Skype and taking an occasional assignment. He hoped to attend the Socialist Action National Convention in August.

### How Gerry became a Trotskyist

In autumn 1960, after graduating from American University in Washington, D.C.,



(Left) Gerry Foley relaxing with Jeff Mackler in Oakland, Calif.

(Above) Gerry Foley speaks at Trotsky Legacy Conference, July 26, 2008.

Gerry began graduate school at Indiana University (IU), in its Russian and East European Institute. There he met a fellow graduate student in Russian literature, George Shriver, who discussed political issues with him from a Trotskyist position.

That same autumn 1960, fate had brought George and Ellen Shriver to IU from the Boston area, where they had been founding members of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) earlier in the year. The YSA was the fraternal youth group of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the main Trotskyist organization in the United States at the time. As a result of joint work with the YSAers in defense of the Cuban Revolution, Gerry joined the Trotskyist movement.

After George, Ellen, and Gerry had left IU, a strong YSA chapter remained behind them. When in 1963 the chapter invited YSA National Organization Secretary LeRoy McCrae to speak on the Black liberation struggle, an Indiana McCarthyite witch-hunting prosecutor, Thomas Hoadley, saw an opportunity to implement an obscure and reactionary anti-communist law. Three YSA members on campus were indicted on charges of “conspiracy to overthrow the state of Indiana by force and violence.” Gerry participated in this important defense effort, soon to become a national and successful campaign for “The Bloomington Three,” Ralph Levitt, Tom Morgan, and Jim Bingham.

After years of effort by the YSA and SWP the law was declared unconstitutional, an important civil liberties victory for the entire socialist movement and for all others who understood the importance of organizing broad defense campaigns for victims of capitalist persecution.

Gerry defended political prisoners in the U.S. and around the world. He was always among the first to sign up to defend capitalism's victims everywhere and was often involved in their defense committees. In San Francisco, he was a leader in defense of Iranian political prisoners and a participant in the defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In autumn 1962, Gerry moved on to further graduate study at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he was an activist in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, also initiated by the SWP and YSA. Soon afterwards, the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis brought the threat of worldwide nuclear war, when the Kennedy administration mobilized the U.S. Navy to confront Soviet ships headed for Cuba with nuclear missiles. The Cubans, who in April 1961 had defeated a U.S.-sponsored invasion at the Bay of Pigs, sought Russian missiles to ensure against another such U.S.-backed invasion.

Gerry was active in Cuba's defense, selling the SWP's newspaper, *The Militant*,

and supporting Cuba's right to defend itself from imperialist attack. And he helped to found a YSA chapter at Madison.

Soon, Gerry moved to New York City, where he joined the SWP and did a short stint as a social worker while becoming a member of the newly formed and militant social workers' union. “I didn't do too well by city standards,” Gerry told me at that time, “because as I saw it, it was my job to get around all the bureaucratic restrictive provisions of the law and make sure that all my clients got on welfare and received the maximum funding possible.”

A few years later, Gerry applied for a job as translator with the United Nations. He filled out an application requiring that he list the names and number of languages that he could translate. He listed 25. Later, his disbelieving interviewer asked Gerry what he meant by 2.5 languages. Gerry replied that the figure was 25, whereupon the interviewer immediately sent for a bevy of language specialists from several UN departments to verify Gerry's claim. Gerry passed with ease and was surprised that he was offered the job on the spot, but with one condition. The UN had a rule that each member nation had the right to challenge its own nationals before their applications could be approved.

Gerry was eventually notified that the U.S. government had vetoed his application. But the outraged staffer who so informed Gerry surreptitiously included Gerry's uncensored FBI file with the UN's letter of rejection. Gerry told me that it had recorded virtually every YSA and SWP meeting he ever attended, every party position he held, every public meeting he attended, and his every landlord's name and address.

Thus, in those pre-Freedom of Information Act days, still in the McCarthy era, Gerry inadvertently became perhaps the first American to see his unexpurgated FBI file. He took some pride in that.

### Revolutionary journalist

Gerry soon became a full-time staffer for the SWP, working under the direction of Joseph Hansen in the production of what was then one of the finest weekly revolutionary news magazines in the world, *Intercontinental Press (IP)*. It was Hansen, Leon Trotsky's secretary during Trotsky's exile in Mexico, who mentored Gerry in the critical necessity of accuracy in reporting, depth of research, source checking, and clear and careful formulations to explain the SWP's then revolutionary

(continued on page 11)



By BARRY WEISLEDER

It was a momentary alliance. Was it a sign of things to come?

Labour and socialist delegates at the Ontario New Democratic Party Convention, April 13-15 in Hamilton, jointly opposed an emergency resolution backed by the party tops that was very soft on the Ontario Liberal austerity budget. The budget slashes \$17.7 billion by cutting public services, freezing public sector wages for two years, attacking pensions, and curtailing collective bargaining that affects some one million workers. A wide swath of destroyed jobs and greater social inequality will be the inevitable result.

Ontario Federation of Labour President Sid Ryan approached the NDP Socialist Caucus in the early hours of the NDP convention, very concerned about a resolution titled "Support ONDP Caucus"—a self-congratulatory puff piece that lowered the bar for ONDP Leader Andrea Horwath and her caucus of MPPs at Queen's Park to prop up the Liberal provincial minority government.

Ryan asked this writer to collaborate on a "referral with instructions" to inject stronger language into the weak motion. And that's what happened. Ryan spoke at a CON mic, and savaged the "party line" to loud applause. Soon thereafter I moved the referral, with rationale. Delegates voted by raising their cards. The chair superficially scanned the forest of raised signs and declared the motion defeated. I demanded a counted vote. In the end, our motion carried 218-200. It was a sweet victory that set the tone. Subsequently, weak resolutions on pensions, pay for mid-wives, corporate taxes, employment standards, and corporate "remediation" (a clean up requirement for departing firms) were re-written.

A Socialist Caucus resolution to commit the ONDP to fight for the "unfettered right to strike for all workers" (including public transit, hospital, and agricultural workers now denied this right), carried nearly unanimously.

As signified by Thomas Mulcair's election to Federal NDP Leader, the Ontario NDP leadership under Horwath is moving to distance itself from unions, the foundation and backbone of the party for over fifty years. Horwath and co. favour a "class-less" approach that offers tax bribes to business (to create jobs) and puts a premium on balancing the government budget without substantially taxing the wealthy.

A parade of NDP provincial leaders, from Newfoundland to British Columbia, and Thomas Mulcair himself, reinforced this message in speeches to the convention.

The labour brass suffered a telling setback with the defeat of UFCW national rep Andrew Mackenzie in the race for ONDP President. Neethan Shan, the choice of the Blair-ite dominant faction of party officials, triumphed. The pro-capitalist "modernizers" won that election by bussing hundreds of supporters into the convention on the Saturday. Attendance peaked at over 1000 delegates. After the count, most of the late-coming voters promptly departed.

The six Socialist Caucus candidates for senior executive posts scored modestly, but articulately augmented a strong intervention that featured the free distribution of over 600 copies of the popular SC magazine *Turn Left*. Forty-five delegates signed up at its display table to join the SC. Three well attended SC meetings laid plans to launch new SC chapters across southern Ontario, including in Stratford, Hamilton, Mississauga and King City. Another sign of openness to socialist ideas was the sale of hundreds of dollars in *Socialist Action* newspapers, buttons, and books.

The convention was not all smooth sailing for Andrea Horwath. In a poll on Horwath's performance, 24 per cent of the delegates voted for a leadership review convention. While 76 per cent saying No to a review may seem like a vote of confidence, normally an incumbent Leader scores in the high 90s. So this was a rebuke of her pro-business and "go-soft on the Liberals" policies—a point later noted by several media pundits.

Meanwhile, the party tops plumbed new depths of policy debate avoidance. Their latest trick is to present resolutions already adopted at ONDP Provincial Council—as much as 18 months earlier. These were presented to convention for debate ahead of resolutions submitted recently by riding associations and affiliated unions. The

# Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

## Labour and socialists oppose Ontario NDP sell-out

Photos this page: Julius Arcscott / Socialist Action



paltry six hours allocated in three days for policy debate was thus *cut in half*. As a result, there was no opportunity for delegates to discuss the growing trend towards top-down interference of party officials with the local riding candidate nomination process.

The party's strained efforts to appear more multicultural and youth-savvy produced at least one enjoyable moment. Juno award-winning artist K'naan dialogued with an invited audience of young Afro-Canadians, and sang a few of his hit songs. But this highlight was part of a manufactured landscape that also produced the election of a slate of candidates for executive more distant from unions and less likely to challenge the capitalist austerity drive that is destroying a century of working-class gains. The struggle continues.

**The Aftermath:** On Saturday, April 21, about 15,000 union members and their supporters rallied at the call of the Ontario Federation of Labour and 80 community groups in front of the Legislature at Queen's Park to condemn the Ontario Liberal minority government's austerity budget. The banner "Defeat the Budget By Any Means Necessary," produced by Socialist Action, was the most poignant, and possibly one of the most photographed banners at the rally. SA's slogan, "Vote it Down," was chanted by the crowd several times, including during the speech by the Ontario NDP Leader.

On April 24, Andrea Horwath and her 16 NDP MPPs allowed the Ontario budget to pass, thus preserving the Liberal minority government. Support for the budget that slashes services and jobs, freezes wages, attacks pensions and curtails collective bargaining rights in the public sector—in exchange for a paltry 1 per cent increase in welfare, and a minuscule tax increase on incomes above \$500,000—is widely seen in progressive

Speakers at Social Action's annual May Day celebration in Toronto included:

(Left) Farid Ayad, national president of Canadian Arab Federation.

(Top) Occupy Toronto activist Magdalena Diaz.

(Bottom) Cuban Consul General Jorge Soberón.

circles as a betrayal. (By the way, the money from the new tax will go to reduce the debt, that is, it will go the big banks.

The question now is: Will workers and their unions challenge the cuts and the attack on labour liberties in the work place and in the streets? ■

## Massive student upsurge in Quebec

By RICHARD FIDLER

A crowd estimated at 250,000 people or more wound its way through Montreal April 22 in Quebec's largest ever Earth Day march. They raised many demands: an end to tar sands and shale gas development, opposition to the Quebec government's Plan Nord mining expansion, support for radical measures to protect ecosystems, and other causes. And many wore the red felt square symbolizing support to the province's students fighting the Liberal government's 75 per cent increase in post-secondary education fees over the next five years.

The Earth Day march was the largest mobilization to date in a mounting wave of citizen protest throughout the province.

In the vanguard have been the students, now in the eleventh week of a strike that has effectively shut down Quebec's universities and junior colleges. In recent days they have battled court injunctions and mounting police repression. Their resilience has astonished many Quebecois and inspired strong statements of support from broad layers of the population. Equally surprising to many has been the government's stubborn refusal to even discuss the fee hike with student representatives.

Addressing the huge crowd assembled at the foot of Mount Royal, student leader Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois answered the taunts against the students by Premier Jean Charest and his deputy, Education Minister Line Beauchamp: "In recent days they have been calling

Quebec students hoodlums, vandals, violent people. That's false! What is more violent than selling the lands of indigenous peoples to some multinationals? What is more violent than polluting the air that our children are going to breathe? We are not violent, it is they who are violent!"

The student strike—the longest in Quebec history—is now in a crucial phase. If it continues for more than a few days, an entire semester will be sacrificed by the students. Yet the strike has held firm. There are still more than 170,000 students boycotting classes and they are now being joined by some high school students. The movement has been sustained by frequent mass assemblies and debates as well as off-campus mobilizations. On March 22, more than 200,000 students and supporters marched through the streets of Montreal, while throughout Quebec some 300,000 students struck their campuses.

Although the police have kept a low profile in the largest student actions, they have been emboldened by the government's intransigence and the complicity of courts and academic authorities. During the past week, the cops have viciously attacked peaceful student demonstrations and arrested hundreds. Popular reactions in talk shows and letters to the editor indicate that many citizens are shocked at the repression, especially in regions outside the Montreal metropolitan area. ■

Richard Fidler is a long-time socialist now blogging at <http://lifeonleft.blogspot.ca>.

**Socialism 2012 —  
Fighting for the 99%**

**International Educational Conference**

**June 1 - 3**

**OISE University of Toronto, 252  
Bloor St. W., Room 2-212**

Co-sponsored by: **Socialist Action / Ligue pour l'Action socialiste – Canadian state; Socialist Action – USA; Socialist Unity League (Liga Unidad Socialista) – Mexico**

**Tickets: \$15 in advance for weekend; \$25 at door for wkend; \$5 per session or PWYC.  
[www.socialistaction-canada.blogspot.com](http://www.socialistaction-canada.blogspot.com)  
[barryaw@rogers.com](mailto:barryaw@rogers.com)**

# Puerto Rico student leader: 'Never give up!'

Ricardo Arduengo / AP



Below is an interview with Puerto Rican student activist Gamelyn Oduardo, a featured speaker at the March 23-25 conference of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC). The interview was conducted by Socialist Action reporters Lisa Luinenburg and Ana Noli. It has been slightly edited for space reasons.

**Socialist Action:** Could you give an overview of the student movement in Puerto Rico?

**Gamelyn Oduardo:** Students in Puerto Rico have a long tradition of fighting back. During the 1970s they threw the ROTC off campus. ... During the 1980s there were student strikes against tuition fee hikes. During the '90s, there was the struggle against privatization of state industries—the telephone company went on strike in '98—and after that the students were very active and involved in the struggle to throw the U.S. Navy out of Vieques. The Navy used the island as an exercise ground and was bombing the hell out of it.

When I got to the university in 2005 there was ... a strike against tuition fee hikes. After that, it was about four or five years before we could get another strong student movement going. At that time, a right-wing governor had been elected, and he laid off about 20,000 workers from the public sector. We decided it was time to organize and to strike. So along with the unions we shut down the island for 24 hours. But of course it's not enough to shut down the island for 24 hours. You know, these people are in power for years and decades, so 24 hours only tickles them.

We started organizing against the stuff that was going on in the university—budget cuts. There was a huge deficit, so they wanted to, as we say in Spanish, the rope breaks from the—

**SA:** Can you say it in Spanish?

**GO:** La laza rompe por lo más fino —

the rope breaks from the narrowest point. They're not going to cut from the administration's six-digit budgets but from student benefits and services. They wanted to eliminate the tuition fee waivers for honor students and students that were in the choir or athletes. So, we went on strike for that in 2010. For two months we shut down the whole university and occupied 10 campuses throughout the island. And we won the strike. The administration had to negotiate, under court orders.

We got them not to change the tuition waivers policy. And we got them to renounce their power of summarily expelling striking students and workers for "being a threat to the community." Now they have to put them through due process.

They agreed to not privatize any of the campuses; that was another of our demands. And they agreed not to raise tuition, at least in the subsequent semester. So we had a semester to organize against tuition fee hikes. And when it was imminent that the tuition fee hikes were going to come across, we decided to go on strike again. But this time they occupied the university with the police.

After the 1970s and '80s a non-confrontation policy had developed in the university campuses. That's because when they brought in the riot police in the '80s the students shot down the police commander. So, to prevent these kinds of things from happening they didn't bring the police inside for over 30 years.

**SA:** When the police re-entered the campus, did it lead to a confrontation with students?

**GO:** Yeah, there was confrontation. We are not at the level of shooting it out with police, but still we threw all kinds of things at them. We pepper sprayed their asses. The most important thing is that the government's not going to fear you or respect you unless you stop fearing the government. ...

**SA:** What was the result of that strike?

**GO:** They didn't back down on the tuition fee hikes. But we also sent some students to make a lobbying campaign in the state capitol. They actually got something passed, obviously with the students' pressure—a scholarship fund. So that the people who couldn't pay the \$800 fee could get some help from the scholarship fund. And we actually expelled the police from campus. So we were victorious, not as we would have wanted to be, but still I think resistance in itself is a very valuable thing.

**SA:** What organizations were leading the student strike?

**GO:** You know that socialist organizations are always active while no one else is active. But ... we [also] have something that we call the FNO—the Non-Organized Front (Frente No Organizado). I'm a part of that, you know.

Before 2010, we had organized in committees around the different departments of the university. And these committees were like a united front of students. We had socialist students, we had students who were organizing for statehood in Puerto Rico—that's the right wing—we had all kinds of students who wanted to struggle for students' rights and worker's rights.

Because that's another thing they'll do, they'll try to take those two interests against each other. They'll say, oh, we have to raise your tuition because we need to pay the workers. They're not paying the workers; they're paying the bureaucrats. So you need to realize that when you build a movement in the university you have to also defend worker's rights, not only students' rights and students' services.

**SA:** What issues were these groups working on?

**GO:** When we began, we were just struggling against Law 7, the one that I told you had laid off 20,000 public sector workers, and froze all collective bargaining rights. And all collective bargained contracts that were in play during that moment were also frozen. The government could do whatever they wanted with the workers. So we were all active organizing for a general strike. Not only in the university, but a nationwide strike was what we were aiming for. ... At the beginning we reached out to the union leaders. But they let us down. ... You know, these people are affiliated to the AFL-CIA.

**SA:** CIO?

**GO:** CIA! They used to call it the AFL-CIA because the AFL-CIO has been very active in Latin American countries, intervening with Latin American democracies. Such as the case of Venezuela, the AFL-CIO has passed many thousands and millions of dollars to the National Endowment for Democracy to do their job down there in Venezuela. So that's why I call them the

Tony Savino / Socialist Action



(Above) Gamelyn Oduardo speaks at UNAC antiwar conference in March.

(Left) University students are attacked by police in front of Puerto Rico capitol building in San Juan, June 30, 2010.

AFL-CIA, because these guys are door knocking for the Democrats also.

**SA:** What was the response from the actual workers you talked to?

**GO:** There is a lot of work to be done to get to rank-and-file workers. But I think that people are pretty receptive. You know, in public opinion the students were on top, and I think that we're still on top. We have to keep on building on the potential that the student resistance brought to the people of Puerto Rico, because since the union leadership and the civic leadership didn't do anything about it, the students stood up. I think that gives them the legitimacy and the confidence to do it again, or even bigger, and maybe go directly to the people.

**SA:** What are the next steps then?

**GO:** We've done some community work in some of the needy communities in San Juan and around the island. Communities of immigrants that the government says are squatters. They want to throw them out, so we're all for being with them and defending them against the police. Also in La Perla. That's a community in the area of San Juan that was hit by a FBI operative—nothing more than the criminalization of poverty. We were inside La Perla organizing with them and with the children also. We did summer camps in both communities.

In the second week of April there's going to be a general assembly of students. This time, the university is proposing to eliminate all of the student representatives from the university government, and all of the professors from the university government. They're also proposing tuition fee hikes that will go into play every year, so every year they're going to reevaluate the cost of the university and raise it up.

And along with this they're trying to pass a security plan—a compulsory ID system. They want to hook the campus up with cameras, you know, bring the whole surveillance tape to the university. And students are really opposed to that because they really know that it's only an excuse to persecute activists and students. So there's going to be this general assembly the second week of April. I don't know what's really going to happen, since I've graduated. But I'm still active, and I'm all for telling them to go on strike, but it's their choice.

And I think that probably we need to be more creative this time. We still need to reach out, no matter if we strike or not. Since some of the student activists who were more active and militant were expelled from the university, and others graduated, we could do the job to go to the streets and tell the people what's going on and get the idea out of the university. One thing that we have to take into consideration when you occupy is that you're like locking yourself up in a space. So occupations are not necessarily the best way to do things if you want to get your message out.

**SA:** Any final words?

**GO:** Keep on organizing, keep on working for a better society. I think that's it, you know, you have to never give up. ■

## ... Spain 1937

(continued from page 7)

is not satisfied with theoretical avowals. Instead of mobilizing the masses against the reformist leaders, including the Anarchists, the POUM tried to convince these gentlemen of the superiorities of socialism over capitalism. ... In order not to quarrel with the Anarchist leaders, they did not form their own nuclei inside the CNT, and in general did not conduct any kind of work there. To avoid sharp conflicts, they did not carry on revolutionary work in the republican army. They built instead 'their own' trade unions and 'their own' militia, which guarded 'their own' institutions or occupied 'their own' section of the front. Contrary to its own intentions, the POUM proved to be, in the final analysis, the chief obstacle on the road to the creation of a revolutionary party."

In his "Spain Betrayed," M. Casanova, leader of the Trotskyist group in Spain, the Bolshevik-Leninists, wrote: "If we have dwelt on the ideas of the Left Anarchists [the FOD], it is because their ideas reflect the state of feeling of the rank and file of the CNT. For the future of the Spanish workers' movement to a large extent depends upon the evolution of the revolutionary rank and file of the CNT and FAI towards revolutionary positions, in other words, towards the positions of the Fourth International."



Today it is similarly necessary that the best militants of the new movements against capitalism be won over to the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. We look forward to a continuing dialogue on these ideas as we stand shoulder to shoulder in struggle. ■

A longer version of this article is available at [socialistaction.blogspot.com](http://socialistaction.blogspot.com).

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH  
and MICHAEL SCHREIBER

*"The Hunger Games," directed by Gary Ross; written by Ross, Susan Collins and Billy Ray, from the novel by Susan Collins, starring Jennifer Lawrence, Donald Sutherland, Stanley Tucci, and Elizabeth Banks.*

Director Gary Ross's film adaptation of "The Hunger Games," from Susan Collins' eponymous novel, has a lot going for it. For one thing, it features a heroine, Katniss Everdeen, played by Jennifer Lawrence, who wowed critics in her breakout role in the indie film "Winter's Bone." She is in virtually every scene, so she carries the movie. Katniss is an independent thinker, a provider, a survivor, and a loner who doesn't care if she's liked.

"The Hunger Games" forces one to think about the future, of a government that not only spies on its citizens, but deprives them of decent living conditions and starves them to death as punishment for fomenting rebellion. But pure repression is not always effective in staving off revolt. Accordingly, the film dissects the methodology of regimes (perhaps our own?) that recognize the value of mindless entertainment and games as a means to tranquilize the population. In the film's fictional land of Panem, the head of government confides to one of his underlings that the rulers' aim is to give people hope—but not too much hope.

The citizens of the 12 Districts that make up Panem are depicted as dirt poor and living in ramshackle homes. In worn, handmade clothes they look like subjects in a Dorothea Lange collection. They are constantly watched by hidden cameras. In an exposition

# Let the Games Begin!



flashback, we see Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson), who works in his mom's bakery, throwing burned buns to scraggly pigs in a pen. He sees a starving Katniss, whose father was killed in a mine explosion, lying in the dirt and does nothing.

Cinematographer Tom Stern uses a palette of grays and blues in scenes that take place in District 12 villages.

The bright green forest under a blue sky provides relief; here, the only place where one feels free, Katniss displays her hunting skills with bow and arrow, egged on by her friend, gregarious Gale Hawthorne, played by Liam Hemsworth. Together they witness a monstrous space vehicle hovering into view, shaking trees and making the earth tremble as it transports the TV reality show "Hunger Games" organizers to the District. The games,

which began almost three quarters of a century earlier as punishment for a failed citizens' rebellion against the totalitarian Capitol, became so popular they turned them into a reality show that people were required to watch as contestants fought to the death.

In front of a crowd of citizens, guarded by white clad, heavily armored (as in "Star Wars") "Peacekeepers," Katniss's sister, Primrose, along with Peeta, are selected by a lottery to be District 12 tributes. In a stunning move, Katniss volunteers in her sister's place.

Like today's military recruitment films, Tributes are shown a propaganda film narrated in stentorian tones by President Snow (a white-maned and bearded Donald Sutherland), to make them feel good about their sacrifice, which is alleged to help their country "keep the peace."

Katniss and Peeta are treated like royalty aboard a richly appointed hi-speed train that whisks them to Panem's Capitol. They are ensconced in luxurious quarters; groomed, trained, and fattened up. Lavishly dressed, they must toady to wealthy people in order to convince them to become sponsors. A scene depicts Katniss's independence and unwillingness to play by the rules: She is brought before a jury headed by a mesmerizing Seneca Crane (Wes Bentley). The jury is too busy gossiping as Tributes demonstrate their skills. But Katniss gets their attention in a startling William Tell move on Crane.

President Snow gives the Tributes an avuncular pep talk, then sends them off in individual capsules, uploaded to a dense forest. Once there, the countdown begins, then the slaughter. We are not spared the sight of hacked bodies and blood. White-clad monitors track and manipulate them on computers built into a Lucite table in a blindingly white war room. They can add deadly obstacles or send supplies and medication to their favorites. As in the CBS TV reality show, "Survivor," the Tributes betray each other and form secret alliances—but virtually all of them lose their lives in the end.

Is this merely science fiction? We note that on May 1, New York City cops employed a flying-saucer-type contraption to hover above the May Day Occupy-labor demonstration and spy on the protesters. In this day of FBI entrapments, indefinite detention, round-ups of immigrants and Muslims, and the militarization of police forces, how long will it take for governments to devise a means of punishing citizens in a way not far removed from a reality show called "The Hunger Games"? ■



Cliff Conner

## ... Gerry Foley

(continued from page 8)

politics. At that time, *IP* was the official periodical of the Fourth International (FI), the world revolutionary socialist organization with which the SWP maintained fraternal relations. Reactionary U.S. legislation prevented the party's formal affiliation, as it does with Socialist Action today.

Gerry remained on the SWP staff for some 17 years, writing for all its publications, with his articles often reprinted by FI sections. His journalistic assignments took him to Portugal, where he covered the 1974-75 revolution, which overthrew the fascist Salazar dictatorship. He also traveled as a reporter to Iran, when in 1979 a revolutionary wave swept from power the U.S.-backed and installed Shah of Iran and opened the door wider than ever to a socialist transformation. In both cases and in all other instances where Gerry's knowledge, reporting, and language skills took him to far-off places to cover revolutionary developments, Gerry collaborated with the FI groups in those countries, which were active in the mass mobilizations.

Gerry left the SWP in 1980 to take a staff position on the FI's new publication, *International Viewpoint (IV)*. He remained in Paris on this assignment for more than

a decade. His departure from the SWP, which expelled Gerry retroactively, stemmed from his opposition to the bureaucratic and cult-like practices of SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, who, along with a compliant new "leadership team," engineered the SWP's rejection of its Trotskyist heritage. This was accompanied by the expulsion of hundreds of its most dedicated comrades, including many of the SWP's founding members from 1938. Many of these comrades soon after formed Socialist Action.

Relocated in Paris, Gerry was a staff writer, translator, and often a speaker for IV at conferences and conventions of FI sections. He authored hundreds of articles covering critical events in world politics and joined the French section of the FI, the Revolutionary

Communist League (LCR).

Beginning in the late 1980s, Gerry's mastery of Slavic and other Eastern European languages, and his keen interest in the mass movements in the USSR and Eastern Europe that challenged Stalinist rule, allowed him to author scores of articles that provided great insight into the revolutionary developments in these countries—especially the critical struggle of the USSR's oppressed nationalities.

Gerry's assessment of the importance of these developments coincided with Socialist Action's. For the first time in decades the possibility of building Trotskyist parties in Eastern Europe and the disintegrating USSR had real and immediate potential. He supported Socialist Action's efforts to send Trotskyist delegations to Eastern Europe and the USSR as well as our contributions to the building of a Trotskyist party in Poland, including the translation into Polish of some important works by Trotsky.

In the early 1990s, Gerry returned to the U.S. to work full time for Socialist Action as the International Editor of our newspaper. Typical of Gerry, however, before leaving *IV*, he insisted that we underwrite his proposal that he visit Hungary for three weeks so he could "learn the language" and more effectively follow events in that country.

Back in the U.S., Gerry was immediately co-opted to Socialist Action's Political Committee, where his knowledge of Eastern Europe and the recent events in the USSR contributed greatly to the depth of coverage in our press.

*Socialist Action* newspaper's coverage of revolutionary developments in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Ireland were remarkable in their detail and analysis, often from first-hand sources or direct participation in the unfolding events.

Gerry eagerly took on assignments around the world. Following the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico, he visited San Cristóbal, Ocosingo, and other cities that the Zapatistas had temporarily occupied, to learn first hand of their impact and to meet with their representatives.

An incident related to the Zapatista rebellion comes to mind that highlights Gerry's desire to directly connect with the people whose struggles he embraced. I visited San Cristóbal to try to meet with the Zapatistas and to observe their negotiations with the Mexican government, which temporarily ended their first uprising in 1994. Before I left for Mexico, Gerry asked me to bring him back a dictionary of the language of the indigenous people. At the time, such an effort was the last thing on my mind. But by coincidence, during a press conference following the negotiations, a fellow walking through the aisles was hawking just such a dictionary, and I thought that I would bring it back to San Francisco to surprise Gerry with my ability to make good on his essentially eccentric request.

I gleefully handed Gerry the dictionary upon my return, and he quickly opened it. In a moment, with perhaps a tiny hint of disdain, Gerry said, "This dictionary is Tzotzil. I need to begin with the major indigenous root language, Nahuatl. It won't do me much good." Vintage Gerry! I am sure that comrades who knew him have thousands of similar anecdotes highlighting Gerry's magnificent eccentricities.

Gerry Foley touched the lives of revolutionaries around the world, including comrades from other socialist currents that do not share our politics, program, and traditions. Socialist Action has received condolences from many comrades outside our movement, comrades who might have differences with us on important political questions but who respected Gerry's diligence in presenting our ideas and who benefited from the material that only his skills and experience could provide.

Gerry was one of a kind. To know him was to be enriched in myriad ways. He lives on in our deeds and dedication to the revolutionary cause and program that he championed for a lifetime. ■

See [www.socialistaction.blogspot.com](http://www.socialistaction.blogspot.com) to read some of the messages that have come in from Gerry's friends and associates around the world. A memorial meeting will take place in the S.F. Bay Area on May 28, and in New York on June 10. See the website for times and locations.

# Egypt: Growing protests against military rule

## U.S., Saudis seek tighter control over region

By ANDREW POLLACK

On Wednesday, May 2, paid thugs hired by Egypt's military rulers murdered at least 20 participants in a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). While the initial core of the sit-in, begun the Friday before, consisted of supporters of a Salafi (conservative Islamist) presidential candidate, one of several disqualified by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), they were soon joined by revolutionary youth who have consistently called for an end to the military regime. Since the massacre there have been reports of detentions of activists; some were released soon after, while the fate of others are still unknown.

Egyptian daily *Al Masry Al Youm* reported that, the day after the murders, thousands marched to the main square in the neighborhood of Abbasseya, in which the MOD headquarters sits. This neighborhood has been the scene of previous battles in front of the MOD, and the military has repeatedly used hired hands to attack protesters (claiming the thugs were neighborhood residents angry at protesters disturbing their peace and quiet). Yet an *Egypt Independent* reporter noted that Abbasseya residents cheered marchers from their balconies.

In response to the massacre, revolutionary forces called for anti-SCAF marches on Friday, May 4—but this time in Abbasseya, not in Tahrir Square. On May 3 the military held a press conference demanding the sit-in end and warning youth not to hold their Friday protest in front of the MOD.

Magdi Abdelhadi wrote in the British *Guardian* that "a year ago, 'down with military rule' was the slogan of a fringe group, The Revolutionary Socialists. Today, it has become adopted by almost all activists, including the Islamists, the military's erstwhile friends." Among those most active in Abbasseya are socialists who are also a leading force in Egypt's growing independent union movement.

Coincidentally, another sit-in launched in Cairo in April highlighted the plight of Egyptian workers—both of those employed in Saudi Arabia. On April 18, a sit-in in front of the Saudi embassy in Cairo was launched to demand the release of Ahmed al-Gizawy, an Egyptian lawyer imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for criticizing the latter country's treatment of Egyptian workers. Gizawy had denounced the kafeel (sponsorship) system, which leaves migrant workers at the mercy of their sponsor, and was sentenced to a year in prison and 20 lashes on charges of insulting the Saudi King. In response to the sit-in the Saudis closed their embassy in Cairo.

*Al-Masry Al-Youm* pointed out that Gizawy "is only one of thousands of Egyptians languishing in Saudi prisons. ... Gizawy's arrest unleashed anger at the often-ignored record of human rights violations against Egyptian prisoners in Saudi Arabia." Rather than call for Gizawy's release, SCAF Chief Hussein Tantawi called his Saudi counterparts to apologize for the protests.

*Al-Masry* noted that "many Egyptian migrants are incarcerated in Saudi Arabia's prisons and stripped of their human and legal rights, often for years. Families of the detainees have been organizing protests around this issue since 2008...."

"One of the main reasons for the suffering of Egyptian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia is the restraining kafala system, which gives employers full control of workers' residency permits. Workers cannot change jobs or exit the country without written consent from their initial employer or sponsor."

Kafala allows employers to confiscate workers' passports, withhold their wages, and accuse them of fabricated crimes leading to detention. Gezawi had filed a lawsuit against King Abdullah to complain about the arbitrary arrest, detention, and physical abuse of thousands of Egyptian guest workers under this system.

The flow of labor between the two countries is paralleled by extensive, and deepening, economic ties. *Egypt Independent* reported recently that the amount of trade between Egypt and Saudi Arabia increased



Khaili Hamra / AP



Khaili Hamra / AP

during the first quarter of 2012 by 50% over the same period in 2011. Saudi investments in Egypt are estimated at around \$12 billion.

Egypt's imports from Saudi Arabia during the first quarter of 2012 amounted to about \$682 million, while the total of Egypt's exports was about \$528 million, part of a growing balance of trade deficit in favor of the Saudis.

Reuters noted that the embassy crisis came at a time when the Egyptian regime was turning increasingly to Gulf capital for economic aid. After assuming power, SCAF had initially rejected an IMF loan, worried that the country's workers would reject the onerous austerity and privatization programs always imposed by the IMF as conditions for loans. But the regime then backtracked and asked for the loan. This in turn impelled it to ask for more Saudi aid so as to be able to better meet IMF demands for smaller budget deficits, which in turn would hopefully reassure potential investors. Said Reuters: "The IMF repeatedly has said that Egypt will need 'adequate external financing from Egypt's international partners,' a phrase that economic analysts understand to mean in-kind loans from European, American, and particularly Persian Gulf Arab donors."

The diplomatic tension between the two countries also follows investigations by the Egyptian government of corrupt Saudi business practices, investigations that would have been unheard of under Mubarak and are only happening now because of mass pressure to free the country's economy from exploitative and corrupt foreign control.

### U.S.-Saudi moves against regional revolution

Meanwhile, the Saudis were also busy tightening military ties with the U.S. as part of deepening involvement in the entire region's affairs, all designed to roll back the general Arab uprising.

Vijay Prashad wrote in *Counterpunch* that "in late March, Hillary Clinton traveled to Riyadh, the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There she met with King Abdullah, and then helped him inaugurate the U.S.-GCC Strategic Cooperation Forum. (The GCC is the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab NATO, whose mem-

bers include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates)."

Washington has also dramatically stepped up its alliance with the "new" regime in Yemen (i.e. the one in place after President Ali Abdullah Saleh's departure, but leaving most of the rest of the old regime, including other Saleh family members, in office). The U.S. has increased drone strikes against the government's opponents, despite repeated outcries at the heavy civilian toll. John Brennan, Obama's chief counter-terrorism official, recently explained the rules under which such strikes occur, rules that allow targeting of individuals whose names are not even known but who supposedly possess "unique operational skills that are being leveraged in a planned attack." In other words, make damned sure a drone doesn't see you carrying a set of pliers anywhere near a jeep that's in proximity to an alleged terrorist training camp!

The U.S. has also raised its monetary support to the Yemeni military to \$1.2 billion, almost matching the annual \$1.3 billion in military aid to Egypt.

On a nearby front, the Saudis, after having sent troops in March 2011 to crush a revolt in Bahrain, are now seeking to exercise overt economic control of the country. On May 2, a speech by Crown Prince Naif to a GCC meeting confirmed widespread speculation that the Saudis wanted to move toward a Gulf-wide common economic unit. Naif proposed to move from "cooperation," as in the GCC's name, to a gulf-wide economic "union." So far only Bahrain has bitten on the idea, which is not surprising given the country's heavy dependence on the Saudis.

The incentive for Bahrain to further its integration with its neighbor comes on the one hand from a still-growing mass opposition, and on the other from an economy which is steadily weakening as investors, both from the Gulf and from imperialist countries, reassess the stability of their investments.

The IMF reported on April 17 that while Middle East oil exporters could see a 4.8% GDP growth this year, Bahrain would be lucky to eke out a 2% increase and would likely have similarly poor performance the following two years.

Bahrain's dependence on foreign investors has been dramatically heightened by its transformation into the Cayman Islands of the region, i.e., a haven for capital thanks to its tax, regulatory, and investment policies. So the loss in recent months of financial sector business and jobs to other Gulf countries has the country's rulers peering into the abyss—and glancing nervously backward for a Saudi hand to stop it from plunging in.

The Abu Dhabi newspaper *The National* noted, "Bahrain's offshore banking sector, which recycles international liquidity throughout the Gulf, is heavily reliant on funding from European banks, which are quickly withdrawing capital amid sector-wide deleveraging as a result of the euro-zone sovereign-debt crisis."

"The volatile nature of foreign liabilities placed in Bahrain's wholesale banks was exposed during the Arab Spring," analysts from Moody's wrote. "This uncertainty will of course only be heightened as the Europe-wide economic crisis deepens." ■